

JUL 1948

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GENERAL

1. Control of Berlin believed primary Soviet objective--US Ambassador Smith in Moscow detects no real evidence of an urgent Soviet desire to negotiate the overall German question and suggests that the USSR is at present primarily interested in liquidating Berlin as a center of western influence. Smith observes, however, that this does not imply that the USSR is abandoning its objectives in western Germany. Smith believes that the USSR might be induced temporarily to forego "the battle for Berlin" if sufficiently attracted by western power concessions on all of Germany.

(CIA Comment: CIA remains of the opinion that concessions on western Germany are the primary Soviet objectives and considers that unilateral control of Berlin is a secondary aim of the USSR.)

2. Reaction to US proposal on Italian colonies--US Ambassador Caffery transmits a report that British representatives attending a US-UK-French conference on the Italian colonies are unfavorable to the US proposal that final decision on the colonies be postponed for another year. The UK delegates reportedly pointed out that such deferment would place upon their country another year of heavy financial and military burdens and would give nationalistic elements in the colonies a chance for further agitation. The French delegates expressed apprehension that the USSR might use this proposal as a means of gaining a share in a temporary administration of the former Italian colonies during the period of delay.

State Dept. review
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